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Sixth Annual

Salary Survey

What Factors Affect Your Fortune?

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FEATURES

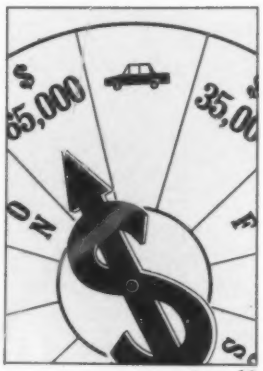
14 PRJ's Sixth Annual Salary Survey
What's the median salary for your specialty, organizational activity or geographic region? How do age, experience and gender affect salary levels? *PRJ's* annual salary survey of our readers provides the answers.
David Y. Jacobson and Nicholas J. Tortorello

22 Gender Gap Narrowing
What's happening with the gender gap in public relations? A new survey shows that while women earn less than men at all levels of professional experience, the salary gap is narrowing.
Donald K. Wright, Fellow, PRSA and Jeff K. Springstein

25 Focus Group Participants Disagree On Gender Issues
Men's and women's perceptions of gender issues affecting the status of women in public relations differ. Insights from two focus groups at the 1990 PRSA Conference highlight these disagreements.
Elizabeth L. Toth, APR and Larissa A. Grunig

WORKSHOP

26 Job hunting strategies for working with recruiters
Gregory K. Shields



page 14

page 9

page 40

BRIEFINGS

9
- Lobbyists court Capitol Hill with videos
- A portrait of Pentagon's media strategy
- Winning a war with "smart" words
- War Notes...
- Electronic classroom offers off-site education
- Quick Takes

DEPARTMENTS

Inside Track ____ 4
What factors affect salaries most?
Susan L. Fry

Feedback ____ 6

Books ____ 30
Revised handbook surveys theory and practice
Jason Berger

Advertiser Index ____ 32

Special Events ____ 34
Controlling the communications impact
Steven H. Blackwell and Tara S. Crihfield

People ____ 35

Fast-Close Classified ____ 36

Opinion ____ 40
A 10-point plan to manage the future
John D. Graham, APR

Cover: *Wade Yip*

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What factors affect salaries most?

In evaluating the data presented in *PRJ*'s Sixth Annual Salary Survey, we see a continuing gap between the salaries of men and women in public relations. In general, a gender gap in salaries persists when age, experience and other factors are taken into consideration. As years of experience increase, so does the salary gap. Women who are accredited tend to do better in terms of pay than non-accredited women. The former also tend to have more experience.

Both the Salary Survey and independent data from a separate survey of PRSA members on "gender gap" issues indicate that the distance between men's and women's salaries is narrowing. In the past year, women have received higher annual salary increases than their male counterparts with similar job titles and levels of experience, both studies show.

While they show similar trends, the two studies are not directly comparable. The studies were done for different reasons, they dealt with different populations and involved different methodologies.

The good news is that the median salary raise for all public relations professionals, regardless of gender, rose an average of 7% in 1990. At $43,718, the median salary for all respondents represented a median increase of 17% over the previous year's average raise. The not-so-good-news for women, at least, was that while 47% of all surveyed made more than $45,000 in 1990, most of these higher-paying positions were held by men, not women.

Putting the gender gap aside, where you fall on the salary wheel of fortune depends on factors such as experience, the specialty in which you work and the type of duties you perform. Partly due to the recession, there was a 24% drop in the number of corporate practitioners answering *PRJ*'s salary survey this year. At the same time, the number of respondents from the non-profit sector rose 20%. Salaries in corporations, on average, remain higher than those in the non-profit sector. Salary averages for similar titles and responsibilities in public relations firms generally fall between the corporate and non-profit levels.

Susan L. Fry, Editor

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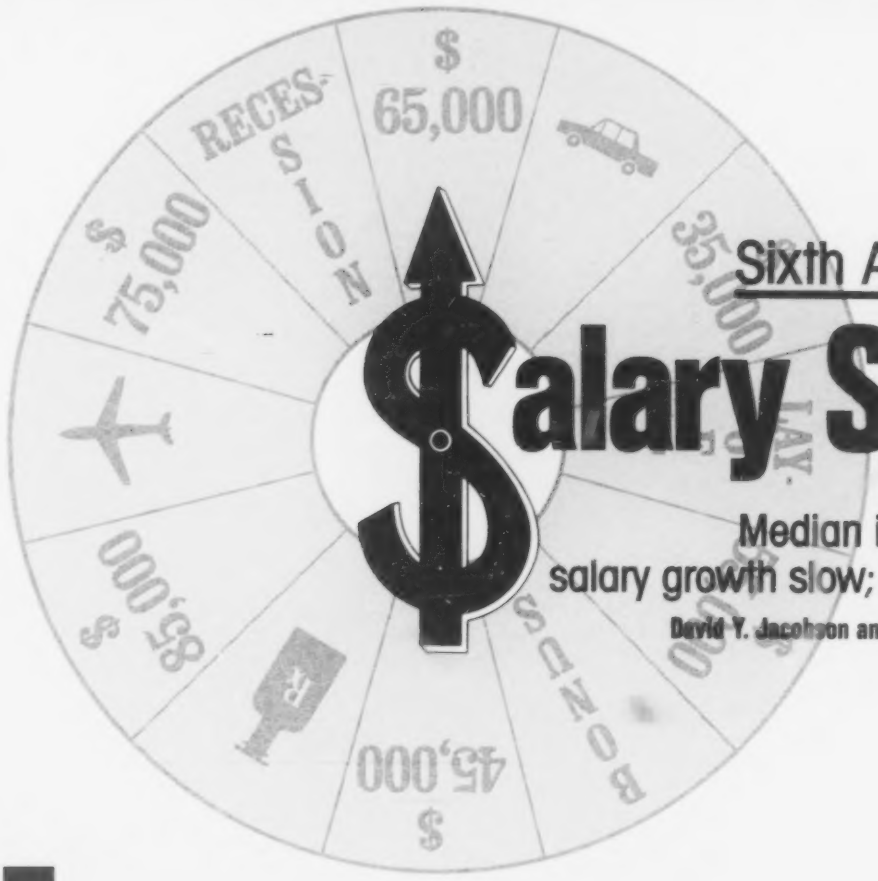


Sixth Annual

Salary Survey

Median is $43,718; salary growth slow; gender gap narrows

David Y. Jacobson and Nicholas J. Tortorello

The current recession has affected salary growth in the public relations profession, according to *Public Relations Journal*'s Sixth Annual Salary Survey. The study reveals *PRJ* readers have a median salary of $43,718. This is up a small amount from last year's results. In all categories, the survey shows slow overall salary growth over the last year.

Analysis of the survey respondents and data also reveals other effects of the recession on *PRJ*'s readership and changes in the mix of specialties represented. The number of respondents from the corporate sector declined by 24%. This suggests that as corporate America has tightened its belt, public relations practitioners have experienced job cuts, layoffs and early retirements. A severe drop has occurred in the "smokestack industries," such as manufacturing and utilities, as well as in the financial services area. The number of respondents from the government/health care/non-profit sector, particularly in education, increased by 20%.

While men's salaries top those of women in all breakdowns by title, region and age, the gender gap in salaries has narrowed over the last year. The great majority of respondents of both sexes rejected the statement that it is harder for men than women to reach top-level positions. The converse, that it is harder for women than men to reach the top in public relations, was a majority view of women but not men in the 1990 survey.

Specific salary, bonus and attitude breakdowns follow.

Salary growth slows

The median public relations salary in 1990 as reported by respondents was $43,718. This is 1.2% higher than it was last year. The survey results are based on 2,606 responses to a survey mailed to 6,231 *PRJ* subscribers, a 42% response rate. The results are projectable to the *PRJ* readership as a whole, but not necessarily to the entire public relations profession. All the percentages reported in this article were tested for statistical significance. The margin of error is ±3%. *(See "Survey method and sample description," page 18.)*

Men continue to earn more than women. The median salary for men is $53,977, compared to $37,621 for women. While men earn 43% more than women, the gender gap has narrowed relative to last year, when the median salary for men was 49% higher than it was for women. The increase in the median salary for women between last year and this year was 4.7%. For men, it was just .6%.

For all respondents, regardless of gender, the median reported salary raise in 1990 was 7%. This is an increase of 17% over the reported median raise of 6% in 1989. The 17% increase in the median overall raise is only slightly higher than the increase in the cost of living. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the cost of living rose from 4.8% in 1989 to 5.4% in 1990—a 12.5% increase year-to-year.

Corporate salaries remain higher

Among account executives and account supervisors, the highest median salaries are earned by respondents in corporations. *(See table, page 15.)* Account executives (including junior and senior account executives, associates/representatives and assistants) at corporations report a median salary of $31,046. This is approximately 7% higher than the median salaries reported by account executives in public relations firms ($28,957) and government/health care/non-profit organizations ($28,822).

Among account supervisors (including account supervisors, supervisors/managers, coordinators, group managers, directors and vice presidents), the highest median salaries reported by respondents are at corporations ($51,572). The lowest median salaries are in government/health

care/non-profit organizations ($40,390). Account supervisors' salaries at public relations firms are nearly halfway between those at corporations and those at non-profits ($45,814).

At senior management levels (including senior/executive vice presidents, senior counselors, chairmen/presidents, partners and owners), the median salaries reported at corporations ($85,115) and in government/health care/non-profit organizations ($87,162) are considerably higher than the median salary at public relations firms ($68,982). This might reflect the relatively small number of respondents in senior management levels at corporations and non-profit organizations in this survey.

At each title level, men earn more than women, though the gender gap has narrowed significantly over the past 12 months at the account executive and senior manager levels. The median salary for male account executives ($31,796) is 12% higher than that of their female counterparts ($28,290). The difference was 22% last year.

The gender gap at the account supervisor level is as broad as it was last year (40% versus 41%). The median salary for men is $55,060 as compared to $39,433 for women. Male senior managers now earn 16% more than do their female counterparts, compared to 32% more a year ago. The median salary for male senior managers is $74,868; it's $64,293 for women.

Gap widens with experience

The gender gap is apparent at every level of experience. The median salary for men with less than five years of experience is $28,992. This is 12% more than what women with similar experience earn: $25,926. *(See table, page 16.)*

As the years of experience increase, so does the salary gap. Men with five to nine years of experience reported a median salary ($43,338) that is 18% higher than that for women with the same experience ($36,811). Men with 10 to 14 years of experience and men with 15 to 19 years of experience earn salaries approximately 20% higher than their female counterparts. The gap narrows slightly with 20 or more years of experience. At this level, the median salary for men ($69,520) is 17% higher than for women ($59,444).

At all levels of experience, men are more likely than women to earn $45,000 or more. The gap between the sexes is highest among public relations professionals with less than 10 years of experience.

Men in this category are nearly twice as likely as women to make at least $45,000. While 11% of the men with less than five years of experience earn $45,000 or more, 5% of the women report similar salaries. Among individuals with five to nine years of experience, 45% of the men earn at least $45,000, compared to 21% of the women.

Thereafter, the gap between the sexes narrows somewhat. Men with 10 to 14 years of experience are 1.4 times as likely as women to earn at least $45,000 annually (72% compared to 50%). With 15 or more years of experience, men are nearly 1.2 times as likely to earn $45,000. At that level, 81% of the men report earning at least that

Salary Survey

Salary by Job Title, Type of Organization and Gender

Job Titles	(weighted base)	median salary	% $45K+
All Respondents (all titles combined)	(2,606)	$43,718	47%
Account Executives (junior and senior account executives, associates/representatives, assistants)			
public relations firm	(161)	28,957	8
corporation	(121)	31,046	12
government/health care/non-profit	(118)	28,822	11
men	(144)	31,796	17
women	(266)	28,290	6
Supervisors (account supervisors, supervisors/ managers, coordinators, group managers, directors, vice presidents)			
public relations firm	(261)	45,814	52
corporation	(704)	51,572	63
government/health care/non-profit	(722)	40,390	38
men	(771)	55,060	70
women	(940)	39,433	35
Senior Management (senior/executive vice presidents, senior counselors, chairmen/presidents, partners, owners)			
public relations firm	(332)	68,982	72
corporation	(24)*	85,115	96
government/health care/non-profit	(27)*	87,162	92
men	(250)	74,868	79
women	(133)	64,293	65

Table excludes non-response to questions about job title and type of organization as well as all "other" job titles.

**Caution: small base.*

Nearly half (47%) of all responding public relations practitioners earn more than $45,000. Respondents at all title levels in corporations report the highest median salaries. At the account executive and supervisory levels, respondents at public relations firms have the next highest median salaries. At the senior management level, the median salaries reported at government/health care/non-profit organizations are substantially higher than those reported at public relations firms. At all levels and organizations, the median salaries reported by males are greater than those of females.

amount, compared to 70% of the women. At 20 or more years of experience, 85% of the men and 71% of the women report earning $45,000 or more.

The gender gap is also apparent with age. *(See table, page 17.)* The median salary for men under 35 years old is $34,324. This is $3,033 (10%) more than the median salary for women under 35: $31,291. The salary gap broadens after age 35. The median salary for men 35 and older, $60,905, is 32% greater than that of their female counterparts: $46,031.

Consistent with these findings, men under 35 are nearly twice as likely to earn $45,000 or more as are women under 35 (26% for men compared to 14% for women). Though the proportion of women 35 and older earning $45,000 or more jumps to just over half (52%), slightly more than three out of four responding men 35 or older earn $45,000 or more (76%).

It is interesting to note that the median salaries rose in all categories except that of men with less than five years of experience. This year's median salary of $28,992 for men in that category is down from last year's median salary of $31,993. In addition, the 1989 median salary for men under 35 was $37,355. This year's survey resulted in a median of $34,324 in that category, while median salaries in all other age categories were up from last year's results.

Another sign the gender gap is narrowing is that women overall report higher median salary raises than do men: 7% for women, compared to 6% for men. Though the great majority of men and women report receiving salary raises, the proportion of women receiving them is higher (79%) than it is for men (72%).

Private, for-profit fields pay more

Respondents were permitted to assign only one primary activity to their employer organization. Broadly speaking, private sector, for-profit activities pay more than public sector, non-profit activities. The median salary for individuals in public relations firms (including public relations counseling firms, solo practitioners and advertising agencies) is $46,283. The median for individuals in public relations positions in companies in manufacturing, utilities, scientific/technical, finance and insurance, media/communications, transportation, hotels/resorts/entertainment and miscellaneous services is higher: $48,796. In contrast, the median salary for individuals in government, health care, and such non-profit fields as education, associations/foundations, and religious and charitable organizations is $39,092.

In four fields or organizational activities, more than half of the respondents earn $45,000 or more. *(See table, page 19.)* These higher-paying fields include industrial/manufacturing, which has the highest median salary: $56,518. The median salary of respondents working for utilities is close to that of manufacturing: $56,072.

The median salary reported by respondents at public relations counseling firms is $50,066 and in media/communications, $46,518. The activities closest to the overall median annual salary for public relations professionals ($43,718) include financial/insurance ($44,867), miscellaneous business services ($44,494), associations/foundations ($43,410) and scientific/technical firms ($42,645).

Among the lower-paying activities, government and solo practices stand out for having median salaries that are just above $41,000. In the other lower-paying activities, half of the respondents earn below $40,000. These include advertising agencies ($39,651), education ($38,926), health care ($38,597) and transportation/hotels/resorts/entertainment ($37,118). The lowest median salaries are in religious/charitable organizations ($33,167) and museums and miscellaneous non-profit organizations ($28,755).

$alary Survey

Salaries: Men and Women, by Experience

	(weighted base)	median salary	% $45K+	% received bonus	median bonus size	% men/women
All Respondents	(2,606)	$43,718	47%	39%	$ 3,426	–%
men	(1,218)	53,977	64	44	12,523	47
women	(1,373)	37,621	32	43	8,403	53
1–4 Years Experience						
men	(158)	28,992	11	37	1,143	13
women	(374)	25,926	5	35	972	27
5–9 Years Experience						
men	(229)	43,338	45	37	2,567	19
women	(454)	36,811	21	36	1,780	34
10–14 Years Experience						
men	(273)	54,419	72	45	4,949	22
women	(287)	45,257	50	33	2,715	21
15–19 Years Experience						
men	(174)	64,292	81	42	10,838	14
women	(150)	53,472	70	44	5,223	11
20-plus Years Experience						
men	(381)	69,520	85	46	9,449	32
women	(99)	59,444	71	41	7,120	7

Table excludes non-response to questions about length of experience and gender.

The median salary for men with less than five years of experience is 12% higher than the median for women at that level. The gap widens to 18% at five to nine years of experience, and to 20% at 10 to 14 and 15 to 19 years of experience.

$alary Survey

Salaries: Men and Women, by Age

	(weighted base)	median salary	% $45K+	% received bonus	median bonus size	% men/ women
All Respondents	(2,606)	$43,718	47%	39%	$3,426	–
Under 35 Years Old						
men	(286)	34,324	26	42	1,949	24
women	(710)	31,291	14	37	1,367	51
35 Years and Older						
men	(930)	60,905	76	43	7,865	76
women	(656)	46,031	52	35	3,611	49

Table excludes non-response to questions about gender and age.

Among public relations practitioners who are under 35 years of age, the male median salary is 10% higher than that of women. At over 35 years of age and older, men earn 32% more. Men of all ages are more likely than women to earn more than $45,000.

Men constitute the majority of respondents in the higher-paying activities. The highest concentrations of men are in "smokestack" industries: manufacturing and utilities (60% each). The highest concentrations of women are in the lower-paying activities such as museums and miscellaneous non-profits (86%), transportation/hotels/resorts/entertainment (73%), health care (71%), religious/charitable organizations and miscellaneous business services (63%), and financial/insurance companies (61%).

Like one's salary, the size of one's raise and the likelihood of receiving one vary by type of organization for which one works. In public relations firms, respondents report higher median salary increases—10%—than do respondents in corporations and government/health care/non-profit jobs, where the median raise last year was 6%.

However, the likelihood of a raise is still considerably higher in the corporate and non-profit sectors. One respondent in five (21%) at public relations firms did not receive a pay raise, while the proportions of respondents receiving no pay raise at either corporate or government/health care/non-profit jobs are 7% and 6%, respectively.

IR highest-paying specialty

The highest-paying specialty according to the survey results is investor relations (IR), with a median salary of $59,151. *(See table, page 21.)* Other relatively high-paying specialties where the median salary is above $50,000 include issues management ($52,962), environmental affairs ($51,820) and crisis management ($50,313).

In IR, nearly seven out of 10 respondents (69%) earn $45,000 or more. In the other high-paying specialties, approximately 60% earn at least $45,000: issues management (63%), environmental affairs (62%) and crisis management (59%).

Other areas with a median salary significantly above the overall median of $43,817 are public affairs ($49,177), corporate communications ($48,727), research ($46,225) and generalist work ($46,157). Specialties where the median salary is slightly above the overall median are employee relations ($44,748), media relations ($44,176) and marketing ($44,167).

In other specialties, the median salaries are slightly below the overall median salary: special events ($43,250), advertising ($43,225), publicity ($42,959) and community relations ($42,637). The lowest-paying specialties are public relations education ($39,540), fund-raising/philanthropy ($38,544) and publications/brochures ($33,771).

Large employers pay more

Over half (56%) of the respondents work in firms or departments with less than five public relations professionals. About one in six (16%) work in organizations with five to nine professionals. Another 10% work in organizations with 10 to 24 professionals, and 11% are in organizations with 25 or more professionals. (Seven percent did not indicate the number of professionals in their organizations.)

The survey data shows that the likelihood of earning more money increases with the size of a firm or department. In the smallest corporate departments, those with fewer than five professionals, slightly less than half of the respondents (47%) earn at least $45,000. The proportion earning at least $45,000 grows to 65% at corporate departments with five to nine professionals, 72% in departments with 10 to 24 professionals, and 83% at departments with 25 or more professionals.

Similarly, in departments in government/health care, non-profit organizations, the proportion of respondents who earn $45,000 or more grows from 32% where there are fewer than five professionals, to 54% at departments with five to nine professionals, 66% in departments with 10 to 24 professionals, and 81% at departments with 25 or more professionals.

In public relations firms, the proportion of respondents earning at least $45,000 rises from 41% at the smallest firms to 52% at firms with five to nine professionals, and then to 58% at firms with 10 to 24 professionals. Interestingly, the proportion of respondents making $45,000 or more in large public relations firms, those with 25 or more professionals, (67%) is considerably lower than the proportion of respondents earning at least that amount at similarly large departments at corporations (83%) or government/health care/non-profit organizations (81%).

The number of respondents at public relations firms reporting salaries of more than $45,000 is another indication of the financial benefits of working for a larger firm. When analyzed in terms of annual billings, the survey data shows that while 37% of the respondents at firms with annual billings of under $250,000 earn salaries over $45,000, that percentage jumps to 58% at firms with annual billings of $250,000 to $999,999. While this percentage rises to 61% of the respondents at firms with billings of $1 million or more, this is not a significant difference.

Pay highest in East

Pay is higher in the East than in other regions of the country. The median salary in the East is $48,485. *(See table, page 20.)* The West ranks second in median salary at $44,409; the Midwest, third at $42,409; and the South ranks fourth at $40,661.

The relatively low median salary in the South may reflect the low cost of living in comparison with other regions. It may also reflect its high proportion of respondents working in the lowest-paying field: government/health care/non-profit organizations. Forty-four percent of the respondents in the South work in those fields as compared to 35% in the East, 34% in the Midwest, and 29% in the West. In addition, a relatively lower proportion of respondents from the South work in public relations firms: 25% compared to 28% in the Midwest, 31% in the East and 35% in the West.

Bonus and perks vary

Almost four out of 10 respondents (39%) reported receiving a bonus in 1990. The likelihood of receiving a bonus is higher among men (42%) than among women

Survey method and sample description

The 1991 *PRJ* Annual Salary Survey was conducted with a systematically drawn probability sample of all paid *PRJ* subscribers. (For circulation auditing purposes, PRSA members receiving the magazine as a member benefit are considered to be paid subscribers. The subscription list also includes nonmembers.)

A questionnaire was mailed to one subscriber in three for a sample total of 6,231, along with a letter asking recipients to respond in a postage-paid envelope. As it was last year, subscribers' response was gratifyingly high: 2,606 completed questionnaires (a 42% response). This resulted in a sample that represents the *PRJ* subscriber base with a margin of error of less than ±3%.

Weighting procedure used

A statistical weighting procedure was used to bring representation of male and female respondents and of various geographical regions in line with the actual demographic makeup of the *PRJ* subscriber list as a whole. This standard weighting procedure enhances the representativeness of the data. All of the percentages reported in this article are based on the weighted data.

Therefore, though 63% of those who responded to the survey were women, their responses were weighted down to represent their actual proportion of the *PRJ* subscriber list: 53%. Men, who constituted 37% of respondents, had their responses weighted up to represent 47%. (Additionally, last year's data were reweighted and rerun in accordance with revised membership data to facilitate comparisons with this year's data.)

Women outnumber men

On an unweighted basis, the proportion of women responding to the survey this year (63%), is significantly higher than last year's proportion (58%). This might demonstrate that public relations is increasingly becoming a women's field.

Women outnumber men at all professional levels except senior management. There are nearly twice as many women (65%) as there are men (35%) among account executives, and women outnumber men at the account supervisor level (55% women versus 45% men). Senior management, however, is predominantly male: 65% versus 35% women.

Men in public relations tend to be older than their female counterparts and have more experience in the field. Though the median respondent age for the total sample is 38, it is 42 for men, and 34 for women. Similarly, the median number of years of experience for the total sample is 11 years, but for the men, it is almost 13¼ years (13.23). This is considerably more than the years of experience reported by the women (8.05 years).

Regional data weighted

In the regional salary analysis, responses from the East were weighted up from 26% to 28%, and responses from the South were weighted up from 23% to 25%. In other regions of the country, responses were weighted down: from 28% to 26% in the Midwest and from 23% to 20% in the West.

Response among sectors even

This year, the response is split nearly equally among three major sectors. One-third (33%) of the respondents are from the "corporate" sector. This includes manufacturing, utilities, finance, media/communications, scientific/technical and travel/resorts/hotels/entertainment. Twenty-nine percent are in public relations firms (counseling firms, solo practitioners and public relations departments in advertising agencies). Thirty-six percent are in government/health care/non-profit organizations. This includes religious/charitable organizations, associations/foundations and educational institutions.

Firms biggest employers

By specific type of organization, the most widely cited employers are public relations counseling firms (21%). Health care organizations, industrial/ manufacturing companies and associations/foundations were each cited by 9% of the respondents. Eight percent are employed by educational institutions. Financial/insurance companies, government, utilities and advertising agencies employ 5% of the respondents each. Miscellaneous services companies, media/communications firms, transportation/hotels/resorts/entertainment firms and religious/charitable organizations employ 4% each. Three percent of the respondents are solo practitioners. Scientific/technical firms employ 2% of the respondents and miscellaneous nonprofits including museums employ 1%.

As in past surveys, respondents could list multiple public relations specialties. Respondents listed an average of seven specialties. This year, the list was expanded to include crisis management, environmental affairs and research.

The most common specialties are media relations (82%) and publicity and special events (71% each). Other popular specialties are community relations (60%), corporate communications (57%) and marketing (55%). Both crisis management and generalist work are performed by 47% of the respondents. Other common specialties are public affairs (45%) and advertising (42%). □

(36%) and among respondents making $45,000 or more (49% as compared to 30% for those earning less).

About half of the respondents in public relations firms (52%) and corporations (49%) received bonuses, while about two out of 10 (19%) of those in government/ health care/non-profit jobs received bonuses. The likelihood of receiving a bonus is the same regardless of age (39% for those under 35 years of age as well as for those age 35 and older).

Bonus sizes vary considerably by gender, age, salary level and type of organization. The median bonus for men was $6,252, as opposed to $2,124 for women. The median bonus for respondents 35 or under was $1,466, but over four times larger for older respondents ($6,092).

Among respondents earning $45,000 or more, the median bonus was $7,544, six times higher than the median bonus ($1,205) received by those earning under $45,000. The median bonus at corporations ($4,753) was one-and-a-half times that at public relations firms ($2,925) and nearly three times that in the government/health care/non-profit area ($1,598).

The three most frequently mentioned major perks that respondents reported receiving in the past year are paid vacations (43%), company cars and/or paid parking (15%) and stock purchase plans (9%). Paid vacations are somewhat more likely to be mentioned by corporate respondents (47%) than by those in government/health care/ non-profit organizations (42%) and those in public relations firms (41%). But, company cars and parking privileges are more likely to be reported by respondents in public relations firms (23%) than those in either corporations (12%) or government/health

Salary Survey

Primary Activity of Respondent's Organization

	(weighted base)	median salary	% men	% women	% $45K+
All Respondents	(2,606)	$43,718	47%	53%	47%
industrial/manufacturing	(244)	56,518	60	40	67
utility	(125)	56,072	60	40	76
public relations counseling firm	(563)	50,066	53	47	55
media/communications	(103)	46,518	50	50	52
financial/insurance	(132)	44,867	39	61	50
miscellaneous services	(107)	44,494	37	63	48
association/foundation	(234)	43,410	44	56	47
scientific/technical	(59)	42,645	51	49	44
government	(131)	41,337	48	52	40
solo practitioner	(79)	41,183	47	53	38
advertising agency	(123)	39,651	55	45	39
education	(201)	38,926	50	50	32
health care	(248)	38,597	29	71	33
transportation/hotels/resorts/entertainment	(92)	37,118	27	73	35
religious/charitable	(91)	33,167	37	63	21
miscellaneous non-profits/museums	(29)*	28,755	14	86	12
other	(40)*	42,828	46	54	46

*Table excludes non-response to the question about primary organization activity. *Caution: small base*

The two highest-paying organizational activities are manufacturing and utilities. Other high-paying activities are counseling firms and media/communications; then financial/insurance and miscellaneous services. Generally, respondents at religious/charitable organizations and miscellaneous non-profits earn substantially less than their peers in other activities.

care/non-profit organizations (9%). Stock purchase plans are more widespread among respondents in corporations (20%) than those in public relations firms (5%).

The types of perks received also vary by gender. Men are more likely than women to receive company cars (18% among men, but 11% among women) and stock purchase plans (13% among men, but 6% among women). Women, however, are more likely to receive paid vacations (48% as compared to 39% for men). These gender differences in perks may also partially reflect the fact that female public relations professionals have less seniority than males.

Higher salaries appear to come with more education and APR accreditation. The proportion of respondents whose highest degree is a B.A. or B.S. and who earn $45,000 or more is 43%. But, the proportion of respondents with graduate degrees who earn $45,000 or more is 57%.

Similarly, the proportion of APR-accredited respondents who earn $45,000 or more is 66%, compared to 54% of the respondents who have the five years or more of experience required for accreditation but are not presently accredited.

Attitude shifts reflect recession

Again this year, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with several statements about the public relations field. (*See table, page 21.*) A majority (60%) agree with the statement, "public relations is a relatively low-paying field." Not surprisingly, in light of the gender gap, agreement that public relations is low-paying is more widespread among women (64%) than it is among men (55%).

There have been some interesting shifts in views over the past 12 months, reflecting the recessionary economic climate. The percentage of women agreeing with the above statement on pay rates in public relations stayed relatively constant (62% in 1990 and 64% in 1991). But the percentage of men who agree with it rose significantly from 50% to 55%.

Last year, agreement that public relations is low-paying was higher among respondents in the lower-paying sectors – public relations firms and government/health care/non-profits – than it was at corporations. This year, agreement that public relations is low-paying is virtually equal across all three sectors: corporations and public relations firms (59% each) and government/health care/non-profit organizations (61%). The median salary of those who agree public relations is a relatively low-

Regional breakdown

For the purposes of this survey, states were grouped into four regions as follows:

- **East:** Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia.
- **Midwest:** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin.
- **South:** Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia.
- **West:** Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming. □

paying field is $40,580—four-fifths the median salary of those who disagree with this view: $49,781.

Respondents are split almost evenly between those who agree with the statement, "I'm satisfied with the opportunities for career advancement in my current firm or company." Slightly less than half (48%) agree, while 50% disagree. Satisfaction with the opportunities for career advancement appears to be highest at public relations firms, where agreement with the statement is considerably higher (64%) than it is at either corporations (46%) or government/health care/non-profits (37%). Satisfaction with opportunities for career advancement appears to be higher among men (53%) than it is among women (44%).

Last year, satisfaction with career advancement opportunities was similar between respondents who are under 35 years old and those who are older. This year, however, the younger respondents are somewhat less satisfied relative to their older colleagues. Of the respondents under 35, 44% report this satisfaction versus 51% for those 35 or older. The median salary of those who are satisfied with the opportunities to advance their careers ($48,091) is higher than those who are not satisfied ($40,319).

"Investor relations is the highest-paying specialty, followed by issues management and environmental affairs"

Last year, when respondents were asked whether or not they agreed that "it is harder for women than it is for men to reach the top in public relations," women were more likely than men to agree (62% of the women, versus 35% of the men). This year, in an attempt to verify this attitude, respondents were asked whether or not they agreed "it is harder for men than it is for women to reach the top in public relations."

Though men are more likely than women to agree with this statement (13% of the men compared to 6% of the women), the great majority of respondents of either sex reject this proposition (86% of the men and 93% of the women). Given the pervasive gender gap in salaries, and the fact that women are still outnumbered nearly two to one in senior management, this finding is not surprising. It is a valid check on last year's results.

Salary Survey

Salary by Title and Region

	(weighted base)	median salary	% $45K+
All Respondents (all titles combined)			
East	(715)	$48,485	54%
Midwest	(684)	42,409	45
South	(653)	40,661	40
West	(529)	44,409	48
All respondents	(2,606)	43,718	47
Account Executives (junior and senior account executives, associates/representatives, assistants)			
East	(93)	29,770	11
Midwest	(113)	29,542	10
South	(98)	27,248	5
West	(100)	31,114	11
All "account executives"	(411)	29,472	10
Supervisors (account supervisors, supervisors/managers, coordinators, group managers, directors, vice presidents)			
East	(480)	49,347	57
Midwest	(455)	45,062	50
South	(439)	42,160	43
West	(333)	45,609	51
All "supervisors"	(1,720)	45,401	51
Senior Management (senior/executive vice presidents, senior counselors, chairmen/presidents, partners, owners)			
East	(126)	82,002	78
Midwest	(85)	66,403	70
South	(86)	66,419	67
West	(84)	71,429	82
All "senior management"	(386)	71,652	74

Table excludes non-response to questions about region and job title as well as respondents who wrote in "other" titles.

The East is the best-paying region again this year, followed by the West, Midwest and South. The median salary for senior managers in the South is slightly higher than that of their peers in the West. The South has the highest percentage of respondents in low-paying fields, and a lower proportion in public relations firms.

Respondents were also asked to indicate which of the following best describes their career goals: a career in a public relations counseling firm, a career in public relations with a corporation or non-profit or governmental institution, or a career outside public relations.

It appears that the respondents in public relations firms are more interested in switching career paths than are respondents on either the corporate or government/health care/non-profit sides of the business. Indeed, the proportion of respondents in public relations firms who want to stay there has declined over the last 12 months from 66% to 61%. However, the proportion of respondents in corporate or government/health care/non-profit activities who want to stay in these areas is as high as it was last year (78% and 74%, respectively).

Salary Survey — Salaries by Area of Public Relations*

	(weighted base)	median salary	% $45K+
All Respondents	(2,606)	$43,718	47%
investor relations	(302)	59,151	69
issues management	(1,023)	52,962	63
environmental affairs	(543)	51,820	62
crisis management	(1,223)	50,313	59
public affairs	(1,165)	49,177	56
corporate communications	(1,493)	48,727	56
research	(588)	46,225	52
generalist	(1,218)	46,157	51
employee relations	(1,069)	44,748	49
media relations	(2,130)	44,176	48
marketing	(1,422)	44,167	48
special events	(1,838)	43,250	46
advertising	(1,116)	43,225	46
publicity	(1,855)	42,959	46
community relations	(1,555)	42,637	45
pr education	(50)**	39,540	34
fund-raising/philanthropy	(29)**	38,544	39
publications/brochures	(66)	33,771	18
all other	(43)**	42,538	46

*Multiple responses permitted. **Caution: small base.

Investor relations continues as the highest-paying specialty. Other specialties with high median salaries are issues management, environmental affairs and crisis management.

Respondents in public relations firms are more likely to want to move to the corporate or non-profit/government side of public relations (22%) than to leave public relations entirely (11%). In contrast, respondents on the corporate or government/health care/non-profit side are more likely to want to leave public relations entirely (14% among respondents in corporations; 13% among those in government/health care/non-profit activities) than switch to a public relations firm (5% in corporations and 7% in government/health care/non-profit activities).

Interestingly, while the median salary of those respondents who want to move out of public relations entirely ($43,212) is lower than that of those who want to move to public relations firms ($47,850), it is somewhat higher than that of those who want to move to a public relations job in either a corporation or government/health care/non-profit organization ($42,204).

There are many overall positive salary trends, even in this recessionary climate. The median salary for all responding practitioners rose. The gender gap is narrowing. Future comparisons will show whether these trends continue.

David Y. Jacobson is vice president, and Nicholas J. Tortorello is chairman, of Research & Forecasts, which tabulated and analyzed the data for PRJ. *R&F, located in New York City, is a division of Ruder Finn.*

Salary Survey — Attitudes Toward Public Relations by Gender, Age, Type of Organization

	total	men	women	Age: under 35	Age: 35+	Organization: firm	Organization: corp.	Organization: govt./ health/ non-profit	median salary
(weighted base)	(2,606)	(1,218)	(1,373)	(999)	(1,599)	(766)	(863)	(935)	–
"Public relations is a relatively low-paying field"									
agree	60%	55%	64%	66%	56%	59%	59%	61%	$40,580
disagree	39	44	35	34	43	40	40	38	49,781
"I'm satisfied with the opportunities for career advancement in my current firm or company"									
agree	48	53	44	44	51	64	46	37	48,091
disagree	50	44	56	55	47	32	54	62	4u,319
"It is harder for men than it is for women to reach the top in public relations"									
agree	9	13	6	10	9	8	9	11	42,233
disagree	89	86	93	89	90	91	90	88	43,951

Table does not show percentage of respondents who are "no answer" for each statement.

Respondents under 35 are somewhat less satisfied with opportunities for advancement at their firms than their older colleagues. The vast majority of respondents disagree with the theory that it's harder for men than women to reach the top in public relations.

PRSA Research Study

Gender Gap Narrowing

Discrimination against women is demonstrated clearly by salary levels reported by PRSA members. The gaps show most clearly when salary is compared to years of experience in the field. But raises reported by female practitioners indicate that the salary gap is narrowing.

Donald K. Wright, Fellow, PRSA and Jeff K. Springstein

The issue of gender discrimination in public relations, as in any field, is an emotional one. Many women feel they are paid less than their male counterparts, and have less opportunities for advancement.

With more and more women entering the public relations practice, this issue has become an increasingly important one. What are the differences between salaries earned by males and females? What are the differences in their roles within their organizations? How satisfied are men and women with their opportunities for advancement within the profession?

To examine the emerging role of women in American public relations, the Public Relations Society of America established a Task Force on Women in Public Relations under the direction of Kathleen Lewton, APR, vice president marketing and corporate communications, University Hospitals, Cleveland.

In cooperation with PRSA's Research Committee, this task force conducted a major research project to explore this issue of gender discrimination in public relations. Research results showed considerable evidence of discrimination against women.

Significant gap exists

Results from both the questionnaire and focus group stages of this research project show that gender discrimination exists in American public relations. *(See sidebar, page 25, for those results.)* With a considerable degree of statistical significance, women in the study clearly were discriminated against in terms of salary. *(See table, page 23.)*

The median salaries of men and women with up to five years of experience are similar, according to respondents in those categories. They range from $22,500 at one year of experience, to $31,000 at five years of experience.

At six years of experience, the men report a median salary of $40,000, and the women, $35,000. At 10 to 19 years of experience, the men report median salaries of $52,000 compared to a median of $43,000 reported by the women. These differences are all statistically significant. The gap continues at all levels of experience.

"Experts on gender discrimination are now focusing their concerns on the corporate and organizational aspects"

The study found evidence that the wage gap between the genders might be narrowing. Overall, women received significantly larger raises last year than did men. Women respondents report raises of more than 7%; the male respondents report raises of 6%. These differences were statistically significant. (The error level is .01.)

Geographic location was found to be an important factor with regard to both men's and women's salaries. *(See table, page 23.)* The highest salaries are on the East Coast, with a mean in the mid-$60,000 range, and on the West Coast, with a mean in the high-$50,000 range. The average salary in the central United States ranges from $40,000 to $50,000.

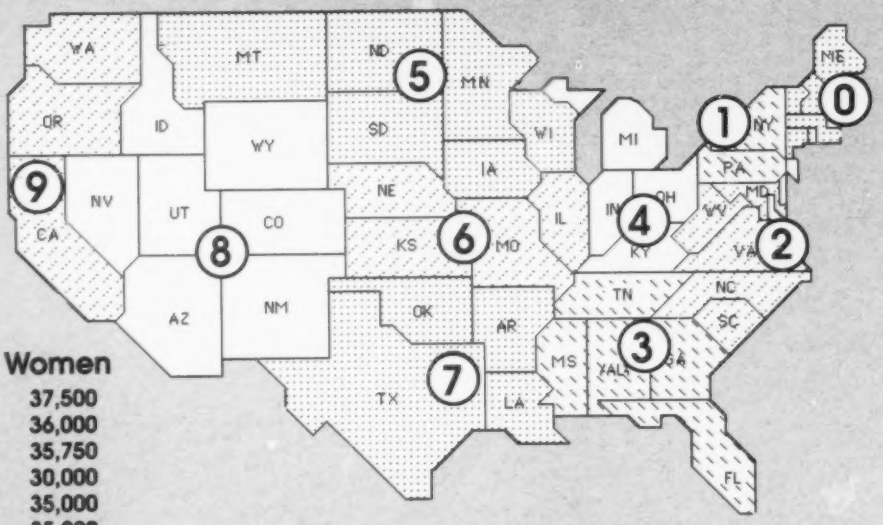
There appears to be a statistically significant salary gap based upon gender in every region of the country. These differences between men and women are the greatest in areas where ZIP codes begin with 0, 4 or 5. The greatest differences are in the region where ZIP codes begin with 0: New Jersey and the six New England states. Differences also are significantly higher than average in the central and upper Midwestern states where ZIP codes begin with 4 and 5.

The study also found that women, for the most part, were more likely to perform technician or communication skills roles such as writing, editing, creating and disseminating messages. Men were more likely to perform managerial and decision-making functions.

Women less optimistic on future

The study also examined job satisfaction and found women generally are less positive about their current job situations than men. Women also were generally less optimistic about the future with their present employers. Men don't perceive as much inequity in their own organizations (with regard to the status of and opportunities for women) as do women. Men and women feel that there is more sex discrimination in the field generally than in their own organizations. However, women perceive

Regional Public Relations Salaries



	Men	Women
Region 0	71,000	37,500
Region 1	50,000	36,000
Region 2	52,100	35,750
Region 3	51,500	30,000
Region 4	62,500	35,000
Region 5	50,500	35,000
Region 6	55,000	42,500
Region 7	51,000	34,000
Region 8	47,500	37,750
Region 9	55,000	40,000

Median salaries are generally higher in the Northeastern, Midwestern and Northwestern states, and California. In all regions, men earn more than women. The gap is largest in New Jersey and the six New England states. There is a wide gap in the Midwestern states.

a much greater degree of discrimination than do men.

Women consider flexibility in the work schedule, with options such as flexible locations, child care and leave policy, as being considerably more important than do men.

Location was not a factor in present job satisfaction, evaluation of the field in general or perceptions of future outlook.

Accreditation major factor

Twenty-nine percent of the survey participants were APR accredited members of PRSA. A much larger percentage of men are accredited than are women (41% versus 19%). Accreditation is a factor in both salary and job satisfaction. Those professionals who are APRs earn on average almost $20,000 more than those who are not accredited ($65,147 versus $46,750). Those who earned their accreditation also are significantly more satisfied with their present jobs and are more optimistic about the future with their employers.

There are considerable differences between women who are PRSA accredited and women who are not. Accredited women have median salaries of $53,000 and non-APR women earn a median salary of $38,000. Women who are accredited are more satisfied with their salaries and their knowledge of the field. They feel that flexible work schedules are more important outside their organizations than do women who are not accredited. Non-APR women felt that it was more important for organizations to provide child care than did accredited women. This might be related to the fact that these non-accredited women are younger and might be more likely to use these services.

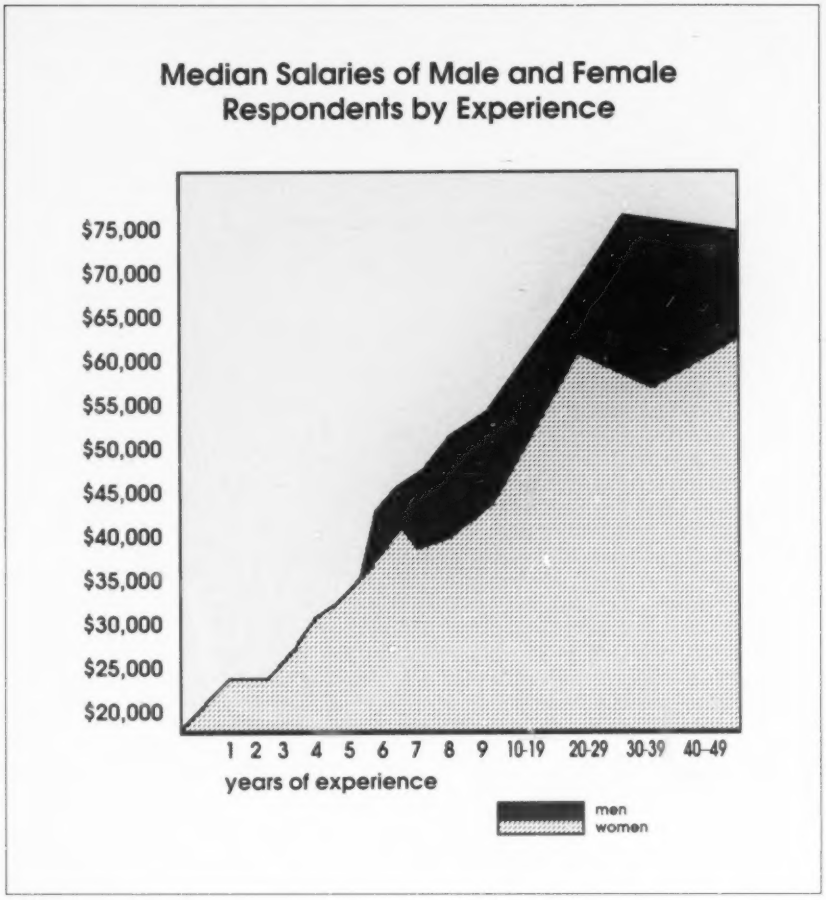
Two methodologies used

The study used two significantly different methodological approaches. In the quantitative stage, a six-page mail questionnaire was sent to a scientifically selected random sample of 2,785 PRSA members. This represented 20% of PRSA's membership in the spring of 1990. After this questionnaire's results were tabulated and analyzed, two

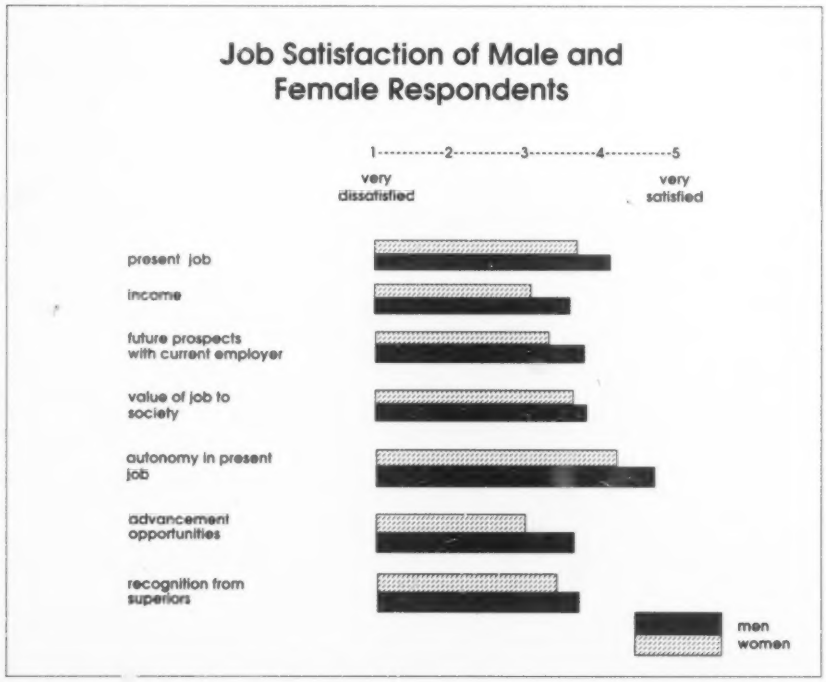
Salaries of Male and Female Respondents

years in public relations	number of male cases	median salaries: men only	median salaries: men and women	median salaries: women only	number of female cases
1	6		22,500		22
2	11		25,000		32
3	12		25,912		49
4	12		30,000		33
5	13		31,000		52
6	11	40,000		35,000	44
7	12	44,000		40,000	32
8	12	45,400		38,000	25
9	10	49,500		38,500	18
10–19	131	52,500		43,600	203
20–29	109	64,000		60,000	48
30–39	67	75,000		56,000	6
40–49	5	74,000		58,000	1

Median salaries of men and women are equal among those with five or fewer years of experience. Differences appear at six years of experience, and continue to show at all levels.



The salary gap widens between men and women with 30 to 39 years of experience. While it narrows at 40 to 49 years of experience, few of these responses were received.



Men report higher levels of job satisfaction and more optimism about the future. In general, respondents of both sexes were generally satisfied with their autonomy at work.

focus groups were conducted to permit qualitative exploration of the project's quantitative data.

In addition to demographic queries, the mail questionnaire contained four separate measuring scales that inquired about perceived job satisfaction, the specific on-the-job tasks or roles subjects perform, and a battery of questions compiled following a thorough examination of previous gender research. *(See table, below.)* Results of the job-related research were not yet tabulated at press time.

Usable responses were collected from 1,027 subjects, representing a return rate of 37%. Of the respondents, 58% were female and 42% were male. The median age is 45 for men and 35 for women. Respondents had worked an average of 11 years in public relations. Male respondents had worked an average of 17 years in the field, and the women, nine years.

Data analysis consisted of a number of statistical procedures in attempts to determine the probability of the relationship differences between male and female subjects. The margin of error for salary information was ±1.5%.

Organizational policies to be addressed

Until recently, experts who monitor gender discrimination concentrated mainly on individuals. They're now focusing on corporate and organizational policies. Dr. Elizabeth L. Toth, APR, a Syracuse University public relations professor, is one of many who now believe the solutions to this gender problem must be addressed at organizational levels rather than at individual levels. "An organization's practices and culture influence recruiting, hiring, salary, promotions and job assignments," she said.

One of PRSA's goals is to use information gathered in this research to plan organizational-level programs designed to correct the inequities. The task force plans to focus on actions that can be taken by individual professionals, PRSA chapters and districts, the national organization, and employers and organizations to address the needs for equality of opportunity and salary equity. Readers with suggestions are urged to send them to the task force via PRSA headquarters.

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Focus group participants disagree on gender issues

Elizabeth L. Toth, APR and Larissa A. Grunig

Men and women in public relations agreed that experience is the main factor in career advancement, according to preliminary analysis of recent focus group interviews. Both the men and women also felt that experience alone will not assure advancement to the managerial/counseling ranks of the profession.

At the same time, separate meetings of men and women resulted in little agreement on the role of gender in career success. On that point, men disagreed that women were discriminated against in public relations, while women believed stereotyped expectations of the types of work performed by men and women often interfered with their chances for advancement to management ranks.

Two focus groups were conducted at the PRSA National Conference in New York City in November 1990. One consisted of 11 men, and the other, four women. The interviews were conducted as part of a joint project of PRSA's Research Committee and its Women in Public Relations Task Force.

Take initiative

The women's focus group advised women to take the initiative, to let it be known that they wanted managerial responsibilities. "If you want to move ahead, you have to have courage, go to the immediate supervisor and list ways you can help the organization," one participant said. Another woman added: "If you want to be a manager, you have to train to be a good manager. This means managing resources—people, budgets—not being a public relations person."

Both the male and female groups discussed the issue of public relations role differences in corporations. The men discussed the "good-old-boy network" and acknowledged that "rewards are not geared to performance, but to the bureaucratic system." Some men stated that corporations are using women as public relations managers to achieve affirmative action goals.

The women's focus group acknowledged the strategy of hiring males over females, even when the female applicant was better, to keep a balance in their departments. Otherwise "the owners would view the area as a fluff department," one interviewee said.

Generally, the women were sensitive to addressing corporate policy issues that were considered "women's issues." They suggested women address policies concerning gender issues without obviously taking the lead. "It's amazing what you can accomplish if you don't want the credit for it," a majority of the group agreed.

The men's group addressed the issue of perceived lack of professionalism of public relations in general. "It's not so much a male/female thing," said one man. "It's happening in a lot of staff services that can't back things up with research, bringing data with the decisions."

Another participant considered the public relations function "all too often, soft and fuzzy." "Holy shoot, if all (this is true)...then how on earth do we strengthen public relations—that's what is worrisome," he said.

Involves personal sacrifice

While the quantitative research showed that women were attracted to public relations because of its flexible hours, both groups questioned this response. The women said that those who found public relations to be a flexible field must be technicians. Men did not see public relations as a flexible field, citing long work days and travel.

Both groups pointed out that their success in public relations had meant sacrifices to them personally. Both groups included participants who had gotten divorces because their careers had come first. One woman advised others: "Organizations won't accommodate individual needs. We make trade-offs. Many who are making it don't have great home lives. Those with great home lives have spouses who are not working."

However, the women encouraged other women to not accept staying where they were—"to recognize the price you pay for getting ahead" and "make up your mind that you'll pay the price." One woman countered that view: "I would like to think that there could be a balance (between career and personal life) possible."

When men were asked, "What if the wife wants a career?" one answered, "Conflict." Another said, "We got a divorce because she wanted to change roles."

The men's focus group felt that a general question asking them to define success was a leading question. One man said that men want all things (such as money, power, marriage, children)—that the question wasn't gender specific. However, "traditionally, men have said I'll go out to work—not everybody can work—both parents can't work 12 hours a day," he added.

Men challenge findings

Only the men's focus group challenged the survey itself. The women accepted the validity of the findings. Despite assurances that the survey's results were in line with many other similar studies, men questioned those who would and would not answer such a survey, the representativeness of the sample to the entire field and compared the membership breakdowns of PRSA with the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).

A typical participant asked, "Where are the women vice presidents of public relations? Why aren't they showing up (in studies of this kind)?" Another answered, "They (meaning women vice presidents) don't belong to professional associations!"

More study of the gender gap issue is in progress. Members of the research team will conduct a professional development seminar on gender issues and public relations at the 1991 PRSA National Conference in November in Phoenix. □

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